

REMARKS

Applicants submit this *Preliminary Amendment* to delete the "**Cross Reference to Related Applications**" section of the application, as the present application no longer makes a priority claim to any prior-filed application.

Applicants hereby notify the Examiner that they erroneously made a claim of priority to an earlier-filed application and now request that such priority claim be cancelled. To that end, Applicants shall file shortly a new *Declaration of Inventors* form from which the claim of priority has been removed. It is therefore the intent of the Applicants that this new *Declaration of Inventors* form shall supersede the two previous declarations filed in this case.

Furthermore, Applicants file herewith an *Updated Information Disclosure Statement (New IDS)* along with copies of all references cited in the accompanying PTO-1449 forms. Applicants believe, and a call to the Patent Assistance Center has confirmed, that such a new IDS is required because the IDS filed earlier in this case (on March 4, 2003) was filed according to 37 C.F.R. §1.98(d) (i.e., without copies of the references due to the claim of priority to the earlier-filed application). Given that the priority claim has been dropped and the present application can no longer be considered a continuation application, the *New IDS*, in compliance with 37 C.F.R. §1.98(a)(2) (i.e., with copies of all references), is hereby filed.

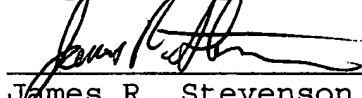
Be advised that Applicants have also filed a Request For Corrected Filing Receipt by which they seek to (1) change the Attorney Docket No. for this case from VI/99-024.CIP to VI/02-023, and (2) delete the priority claim data.

CONCLUSION

In this Preliminary Amendment, only the "**Cross Reference to Related Applications**" section of the application has been deleted. The present application was filed with a total of forty-eight (48) claims, seven (7) of which were independent claims. These claims remain in effect, as they have not been changed by this Preliminary Amendment.

If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Preliminary Amendment, he is invited to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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